

World Society for the Protection of Animals challenges FDA stand on animal cloning

January 23, 2007 – In the wake of the draft assessment by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which moves the nation closer to the widespread sale of meat and dairy products from animal clones and their offspring, the World Society for the Protection of Animals urges the public to take action.

“Animals cannot speak for themselves in the debate over the FDA’s proposal, so those of us who care about animal welfare must speak out for them,” said Dr. Allan Kornberg, Executive Director of WSPA in the United States.

WSPA is the world’s largest federation of animal welfare organizations, representing nearly 750 member societies in 146 countries. In the U.S. member societies include the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Humane Society of the United States and other large groups with more than 10 million supporters nationwide.

“The FDA’s statement in December 2006 that ‘Cloning poses no unique risks to animal health,’ is completely misleading. Most clone embryos die before birth, and many of the few clones that are born alive suffer from serious abnormalities and premature death,” Dr. Kornberg said.

He also noted that many of the animals being cloned are those with particularly high productivity, such as cows with excessively large udders that produce more milk but also suffer from major leg problems and painful diseases.

“It is unconscionable to use biotechnology to knowingly create animals that will suffer in order to produce milk and meat that most Americans would prefer not to consume,” he added. “If the FDA allows these products to be brought to market, they must be labeled so that consumers can make informed choices.”

Whether because of concerns for human safety or animal welfare, 64 percent of Americans said they were uncomfortable with animal cloning in a 2006 poll conducted by the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology.

Peter Davies, Director General of the London-based World Society for the Protection of Animals, pointed out that public opinion in other countries including the European Union and Canada is equally or even more strongly opposed.

“In the event that the sale of meat and milk from animal clones is actually permitted in the United States, other countries would be likely to refuse to import these products, especially in the absence of appropriate labeling,” he said.

“The FDA has stated that it ‘does not have authority to address the ethics of animal cloning,’ but the evidence for welfare problems in animal clones is scientifically verified and huge in its scale and severity,” Dr. Kornberg said.

“WSPA urges every American who cares about animals to express their concern to the FDA, government representatives, religious and community leaders, and the media. Please speak out on behalf of the thousands of farm animals who will suffer in silence if we allow the commercialization of products from clones and their offspring to go unchallenged.”

Comments can be submitted to the FDA until April 2, 2007. For more information and a direct link to the FDA's site for submitting comments, visit www.wspa-usa.org or visit: www.fda.gov and click on Animal Cloning under Hot Topics then on Submit Comments.

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